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THE PROBLEM OF JESUS.

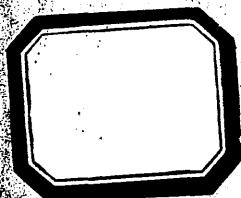
BY

GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN.

PHILADELPHIA:

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

"THE Problem of Jesus" is the rich fruitage of a long-continued and profound study. The author, to use his own reverent expression, "offers it as his personal tribute to the Saviour." It is published in the hope that by a wide circulation it may accomplish a twofold purpose: namely, to attract many to the study of the wonderful personality of the Divine Man, and also to provide an income, which, be it small or great, the author has in advance dedicated to the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

THE PUBLISHERS.

PHILADELPHIA, JUNE 1st, 1891.

THE PROBLEM OF JESUS.

The Problem of Jesus is twofold. First: a philosophical—How will you account for him? Secondly: a practical—What will you do with him?

The Philosophical Problem: How will you account for Jesus of Nazareth?

JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE MOST REMARKABLE PHENOMENON IN HUMAN HISTORY. However much men may differ about him in other respects, they all agree about him in this. Let us examine the matter somewhat closely.

Jesus is a phenomenon in respect to his Personality.

Glance for a moment at his mental structure. There have been many men of genius in the world. But brilliant and great as

these men were, they were more or less unbalanced. On the other hand, Jesus of Nazareth held his manifold diverse gifts in perfect poise. For example :—Jesus was intellectual, yet not cold ; contemplative, yet not abstracted ; acute, yet not sharp ; subtle, yet not tenuous ; swift, yet not heedless ; scrutinizing, yet not morbid ; discriminating, yet not casuistical ; wise, yet not oracular ; aphoristic, yet not frigid ; explanatory, yet not rabbinic ; ingenious, yet not sophistical ; imaginative, yet not fanciful ; original, yet not pretentious ; metaphorical, yet not nebulous ; didactic, yet not pedagogic ; positive, yet not dogmatic ; clear, yet not thin ; homely, yet not vulgar ; humorous, yet not hilarious ; piquant, yet not biting ; practical, yet not plodding ; constructive, yet not extravagant ; philosophical, yet not dialectical ; telescopic, yet not obscure ; microscopic, yet not finical ; profound, yet not abysmal ; broad, yet not vague ; lofty, yet not airy ; idealistic, yet not Quixotic ;—in brief, a transcendent

genius, yet not a transcendental prodigy. Jesus of Nazareth is time's intellectual phenomenon.

Glance now at his moral character. There have been many noble characters in this world ;—glorious heroes, patriots, philanthropists, reformers, martyrs ; men and women before whose names Christendom bows, and bows justly. It is around such transcendent characters as these, towering like mountains above the common plains of humanity, that the reverence of the ages loves to wrap the robe of a spotless purity ; even as the virgin snow envelops the distant Alpine ranges. But as the actual attempt to climb those snowy heights discloses here and there huge gorges and beetling precipices ; so, alas, does a nearer inspection of these transcendent characters in human history disclose many a defect and even deformity, which mars and sometimes even wholly hides the general beauty. Lincoln, Washington, Cromwell, Luther, Alfred, Paul,

Cicero, Confucius, Socrates, David, Moses, Abraham, were far from faultless, even in the eyes of men. Only one character in all history has successfully endured all tests of keenest scrutiny. For eighteen hundred years, that character has been before the world, occupying in sight of Christendom the most conspicuous niche in the Valhalla of the world's heroes. For eighteen hundred years, scholars, skilled in all arts of searching criticism, have scrutinized every detail of that character, as the sculptor searches for signs of flaw in the marble block he proposes to chisel. And what is the result? After nearly two milleniums of fiery criticism, the character of Jesus of Nazareth still shines as earth's purest diamond. Even unbelief itself assigns to the Man of Nazareth the supreme post of honor among earth's heroes, crowning him King of the kingliest.

"No mortal can with him compare
Among the sons of men ;
Fairer is he than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train."

It is audacious to undertake a portrait-ure of this incomparable Character. But it is one of the elements in our problem ; and it must be essayed. Of course, only the swiftest outline can be endeavored. Jesus of Nazareth was faultless, without dulness ; patriotic, without partizanship ; courteous, without hollowness ; dignified, without stiffness ; delicate, without daintiness ; calm, without stolidity ; enthusiastic, without optimism ; guileless, without childishness ; frank, without effusiveness ; chivalrous, without rashness ; aggressive, without pugnacity ; conciliatory, without sycophancy ; prudent, without time-serving ; modest, without self-depreciation ; gracious, without condescension ; just, without severity ; lenient, without laxity ; flexible, without vacillation ; conservative, without obstructiveness ; progressive, without precipitance ; patient, without stoicism ; persistent, without perverseness ; imperative, without imperiousness ; decisive, without bluntness ; heroic, without coarseness ; self-

conscious, without self-conceit ; hopeful, without dreaminess ; sad, without gloom ; sympathetic, without connivance ; generous, without prodigality ; frugal, without churlishness ; appreciative, without flattery ; stern, without censoriousness ; indignant, without bitterness ; forgiving, without feebleness ; sociable, without familiarity ; reserved, without moroseness ; self-denying, without asceticism ; unworldly, without unwisdom ; conscientious, without fanaticism ; trustful, without improvidence ; diversified, without contrariety ;—in a word, perfect, without unnaturalness. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report—if there be any virtue and if there be any praise—all these are impersoned in the Nazarene ; all colors of all virtues, all hues of all graces, blending in his own pure whiteness, as though he himself were Eternal God's own

blessed Sunbeam. He is the universal Homo; blending in himself all races, ages, sexes, temperaments. He is the essential Vir, from the hem of whose robe virtue is ever flowing. He himself realizes Auguste Comte's majestic dream of the Apotheosis of Humanity. Recall the countless tributes paid to him, consciously and unconsciously, by memoirs, commentaries, sermons, creeds, theologies, periodicals, poems, novels, paintings, structures, melodies, and especially by the endless variety of assaults. He is the archetypal, ideal man; the symbol and representative of perfected mankind; the sum-total, so to speak, of an unfolded, full-filled humanity. In one profound Biblical phrase, he is "the Son of Man:"—not a son of man; not a son of men; not the son of men; but THE SON OF MAN; the representative and exemplar of humanity; the Son of Humankind. Jesus of Nazareth is time's personal Phenomenon.

Glance now at his personal claims. Listen to his own declarations—declarations intensely egoistic, but so natural and credible that we are neither startled nor offended by them. For example: "All that came before *me* (in place of me as teachers) are thieves and robbers;" "He that loveth father or mother more than *me* is not worthy of *me*;" "No one cometh unto the Father, except through *me*;" "*I* and my Father are one;" "Come unto *me*, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest." "*I* am the light of the world;" "*I* am the bread of life;" "*I* am the water of life;" "*I* am the resurrection and the life;" "Before Abraham was, *I* am" (not I was, but I am); "Lo, *I* am (not I will be, but I am) with you alway, unto the end of the world;" "*I* am the Alpha (the source of all things) and *I* am the Omega" (the goal of all things), etc. In brief, Jesus of Nazareth is time's phenomenal Personality.

Again, Jesus is a phenomenon in respect to his Religion.

His religion is phenomenal, first, in respect to its purpose. That purpose was not to organize a sect, frame a ritual, found a theology, propagate a dynasty. But his purpose was to transfigure human character. Recall his doctrine of spirituality, of worship, of purity, of forgiveness, of self-denial, of society, of blessedness, of morality; in one word, of Character. Compare his Heaven—the heaven that he came to open to mankind—with the heaven of the Greek Elysium, the Moslem Paradise, the Scandinavian Valhalla, the Indian Hunting-ground, the Buddhistic Nirvana. Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.

Again, the religion of Jesus is phenomenal in respect to its method. That method was not by sword, not by legislation, not by prodigy, not by shout, not by gold, not even by lore. That method was by teaching, by parable, by example, by witnessing.

Listen to his own testimony before Pontius Pilate: "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth: every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" In fine, Christianity is an absolutely phenomenal Religion.

Once more: Jesus is a phenomenon in respect to his Influence.

Observe first his personal influence over individuals. Out of untold millions who have felt, *more or less directly*, his sway, I can of course mention but a few; and these only as typical examples.

See first of all how he influenced his own *contemporaries*: for instance, his blessed mother, his forerunner, his apostles, his evangelists, his ministering women, Nicodemus of Jerusalem, the woman of Samaria, the centurion of Capernaum, Zaccheus of Jericho, the Greek proselytes, Joseph of Arimathea, Saul of Tarsus, as one born out of due time. See how he influenced even those who were not his followers; as when

sacrilegious traders fled before him, or Roman soldiers fell prostrate at sight of him, or heathen Pilate tried to release him, or pagan centurion confessed his divinity, or remorseful Judas hung himself, or guilty Sanhedrin bribed Roman sentry. The very demons themselves felt his power and trembled.

See how Jesus has been influencing men and women ever since. See, for example, how he influenced the men known as the *fathers*, apostolic and apologetic: for instance, Clement of Rome, Irenæus, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Ambrose. See how he has influenced *missionaries*: for instance, Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, Ulphilas the apostle of the Goths, Patrick the apostle of Ireland, Columba the apostle of Scotland, Augustine the apostle of England, Boniface the apostle of Germany, Ansgar the apostle of Scandinavia, Cyrill the apostle of Bohemia, Methodius the apostle of Moravia, Xavier the apostle of Japan, Eliot, the apostle of Massachusetts, Carey the apostle of

Hindustan, Judson the apostle of Burma, Morrison the apostle of China, Martyn the apostle of Persia, Smith the apostle of Syria, Goodell the apostle of Armenia, Moffat the apostle of Bechuana, Ellis the apostle of the South Sea Islands, Patteson the apostle of the New Hebrides, McAll the apostle of France. See how he has influenced *preachers*: for instance, Apollos the Alexandrian, Basil the Great, Gregory the Nazianzen, John the golden-mouthed, Tauler the mystic, Taylor the churchman, Baxter the non-conformist, Bunyan the dreamer, Massillon the orator, Whitefield the evangelist, Hall the eloquent, Schleiermacher the versatile, Mason the Ciceronian, Lacordaire the Dominican, Chalmers the reformer, Robertson the broad, Beecher the humanitarian, Spurgeon the Calvinist, Brooks the catholic, Moody the lay-preacher. See how he has influenced *exeges*: I will mention only the names of some of those who have commented on his words, his acts, or the writings of his personal

apostles : for instance, Origen the Greek, Jerome the Latin, Bengel the German, Reuss the Frenchman, Godet the Swiss, Lightfoot the Anglican, Robinson the American. See how he has influenced *biographers* : I mean some of those who have written memoirs of him, for instance, Neander, Lange, Pressense, Ellicott, Andrews, Farrar, Geikie, Young, Hanna, Beecher, Crosby, Edersheim, Stalker ; even Strauss and Renan do him the homage of their elaborate doubts. See how he has influenced *theologians* : for instance, Athanasius the subtle, Gregory the profound, Hilary the eloquent, Augustine the great, Anselm the scholastic, Bonaventure the seraphic, Aquinas the angelic, Calvin the masterly, Swedenborg the mystical, Edwards the philosophical, Schleiermacher the evangelical-critical, Fuller the Baptist, Watson the Methodist, Dorner the Lutheran, Hodge the Presbyterian, Bushnell the Congregationalist. See how he has influenced *reformers* : for instance, Hildebrand

of Tuscany, Arnold of Brescia, Wycliff of England, Huss of Bohemia, Savonarola of Florence, Luther of Germany, Zwingli of Switzerland, Farel of France, Knox of Scotland, Hooper the Puritan, Fox the Quaker, Wesley the Methodist, Döllinger the Old Catholic. See how he has influenced *colonists*: for instance, Robinson of Leyden, Bradford of Massachusetts, Williams of Rhode Island, Bogardus of New York, Calvert of Maryland, Penn of Pennsylvania, Oglethorpe of Georgia. See how he has influenced *hymnists*: for instance, Anatolius the Greek, Ambrose the Latin, Prudentius the Spaniard, Adam the Victorine, Bernard the Cistercian, Bernard the Benedictine, Thomas the Franciscan, Luther the reformer, Gerhardt the Lutheran, Tersteegen the mystic, Watts the independent, Stennett the Baptist, Wesley the Methodist, Cowper the Episcopalian, Montgomery the Moravian, Bowring the Unitarian, Bonar the Presbyterian, Newman the Romanist, Palmer the Congregationalist;

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also such women hymnists as Ann Steele, Charlotte Elliott, Sarah Adams, Frances Havergal. See how he has influenced *heroes*: for instance, Godfrey of Bouillon, Tancred of Sicily, Robert the Bruce, Bayard the Chevalier, Joan of Arc, Columbus of Genoa, Sidney of Penshurst, Havelock of Lucknow, Brown of Harper's Ferry, Jackson of Stonewall, Meade of Gettysburg, Farragut of New Orleans, Livingstone of Africa; to say nothing of the countless heroes and heroines who have endured every trial for his sake in the home and in the shop. See how he has influenced *philanthropists*: for instance, Dorcas of Joppa, Vincent of Paul, Francke of Halle, Zinzendorf of Herrnhut, Howard of Hackney, Clarkson of Wisbeach, Oberlin of Strasburg, Fry of Norwich, Gallaudet of Hartford, Mueller of Bristol, Fliedner of Kaiserwerth, Nightingale of Scutari, Phillips of Boston, Shaftesbury of London, Brace of New York. See how he has influenced *educators*: for instance, Alcuin of

York, Groot of Deventer, Melancthon of Wittenberg, Pestalozzi of Zurich, Raikes of Gloucester, Arnold of Rugby, Wayland of Providence, Trumbull of Philadelphia ; to say nothing of the many Christian founders of various kinds of institutes, or of the multitudes of Christian teachers in schools of all kinds, sacred and secular. See how he has influenced *philosophers* : for instance, Justin of Shechem, Bacon of Verulam, Descartes of Touraine, Berkeley of Newport, Pascal of Clermont, Leibnitz of Leipzig, Butler of Durham, Edwards of Princeton, Kant of Konigsberg, Coleridge of Highgate. See how he has influenced *historians* : for instance, Eusebius, Bede, Bossuet, Neander, Guizot, Bunsen, Milman, Montalembert, Merivale, Stanley, Schaff. See how he has influenced *poets* : for instance, Dante, Tasso, Chaucer, Spencer, Herbert, Vaughan, Shakespeare, Milton, Young, Klopstock, Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Keble, Faber, Longfellow, the Brownings, Tennyson, Lowell, Bickersteth,

Whittier. See how he has influenced *artists*: for instance, such painters as Cimabue, Giotto, Angelico, Leonardo, Titian, Correggio, Michael-Angelo, Raphael, Domenichino, Guido, Durer, Holbein, Murillo, Overbeck, Hunt, Millet, Dore, Rossetti; such sculptors as Ghiberti, Donatello, Leonardo, Michael-Angelo, Visscher, Canova, Thorwaldsen, Donndorf; such architects as the designers of the cathedrals of Amiens, Canterbury, Chartres, Cologne, Durham, Ely, Lincoln, Milan, Notre Dame of Paris, Rheims, Salisbury, St. Peter's of Rome, Strasburg, Westminster, Winchester; such musicians as Ambrose, Gregory, Luther, Tallis, Palestrina, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mendelsohn, Spohr, Lowell, Gregor, Lind, Gounod, Dykes, Weber. See how he has influenced *writers*: they are as countless "as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in Vallambrosa;" let me mention but one name; his genius shall represent them all—*John Bunyan*. See how he has influenced *states-*

men: for instance, Alfred the Great, Coligny the Huguenot, Murray the Regent, Hampden the Patriot, Cromwell the Protector, William of Orange, Gustavus Adolphus, Wilberforce the philanthropist, Lincoln the martyr, Bright the orator, Gladstone the grand. See how he has influenced *lawyers*: for instance, Grotius the theologian, Selden the scholar, Hale the just, Marshall the jurist, Kent the Chancellor, Maine the historian, Selborne the hymnist, Wharton the erudite. See how he has influenced *merchants*: for instance, Samuel Budgett, Nathaniel R. Cobb, the Lawrences, Peter Cooper, George Peabody, William E. Dodge, Samuel Morley, John Welsh, George Williams, Robert Young, Charles Pratt. See how he has influenced *physicians*: for instance, Luke the beloved, William Harvey, Sir Thomas Browne, Herman Boerhaave, Thomas Sydenham, David Hartley, Benjamin Rush, Joseph Hartshorne, John Abercrombie, Sir James Y. Simpson, D. Hayes Agnew.

See how he has influenced *scientists*: you say that the Academy is skeptical: let me then appeal both to number and to weight; for instance, Bacon, Copernicus, Kepler, Napier, Descartes, Pascal, Newton, Barrow, Horrocks, Leibnitz, Buffon, the Herschells, Cuvier, Lavater, Swedenborg, Davy, Playfair, Silliman, Milne-Edwards, Brewster, Buckland, Faraday, Agassiz, Henry, Carpenter, Guyot, Gray, Gould, Dana, Argyle, Peirce, Quatrefages, Mitchell, the Le Contes, Dawson, Houghton, Clerke-Maxwell, Mivart, Geikie, Wallace, Beale, Cooke, Whewell, Hill, Secchi, Thompson, Winchell, Young, *Verchur,* McCook. See how he has influenced *sociologists*: for instance, More, St. Simon, Owen, Blanc, Maurice, Kingsley, Marx, Woolsey, George. True, some of these were far from being what we call "Christians;" nevertheless, Jesus stood among them, and they knew him not. See how he has influenced *martyrs*: for instance, Stephen of Jerusalem, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp

of Smyrna, Perpetua of Africa, Felicitas of Rome, Sebastian of Narbonne, Cyprian of Carthage, Alban of Verulam, Pamphilus of Berytus, Tyndale of North Umbria, Latimer of Worcester, Margaret of Wigtonshire, Rosalama of Madagascar, Gordon of Eromanga, Hannington of South Africa ; to say nothing of the anonymous thousands who have fallen by organized persecutions in Italy, Germany, Spain, France, England ; or of the countless saints who have suffered practical martyrdom for Jesus' sake in daily life. See how he is personally influencing men and women to-day, converting and transfiguring into his own likeness Jews and Gentiles, Mongolians and Kelts, Iranians and Eskimos, Hottentots and Iroquois, patriarchs and infants, savages and sages, drunkards and harlots, blasphemers and felons. In short, the nearer any man approaches Jesus of Nazareth, the loftier that man becomes.

Observe now the general influence of Jesus over society. See how it is he him-

self who, in virtue of his own personality and character, is making the difference between Christendom and heathendom ; that is, between Christ-domain and heathen-domain. See how the spirit of Jesus Christ is permeating, like a healing elixir, the disordered frame-work of society : opening its clogged veins, expelling its foul humors, touching its springs of health, restoring it to the image of God. See how under his influence, or the sense of his constraining love, Christian missionaries are giving to pagans the boons of liberty, industries, property, peace, temperance, chastity, education, amenities, morals, home. See how his influence is softening the barbarism of the world's legislations : abolishing its cruel slaveries, its private duels, its aggressive wars, its loose divorces, its filthy imprisonments, its scaffold butcheries, its murderous dramshops, its secret seraglios. See how his influence is reconstructing society : founding missions, asylums, hospitals, orphanages, colleges, institutes for

body and mind and heart, transfiguring childhood, uplifting woman, rearing courts of arbitration, ennobling jurisprudence, establishing and maintaining rights of labor, property, person, name, home, trade, conscience, manhood. See how the Nazarene has influenced chronology itself. Why do you not, O Christian, observe the Mosaic Sabbath by worshiping on Saturdays in the synagogue? Because you believe that Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, and you revere him so much that you take his resurrection-day as your Sabbath. How do you date your letters, O skeptic? It may be that you have just written one. In dating it, why did you not reckon from the Greek Olympiad? from Rome's Foundation? from Mohammed's Flight? from Buddha's Birth? from Comte's Calendar? Why did you date it, December twenty-fifth, 1890? Because, according to the common chronology, Jesus of Bethlehem was born 1890 years ago; this is why we say—*Anno Domini*—YEAR OF OUR LORD,

1890. See how the Man of Nazareth has consecrated the commonest things: transfiguring water into baptism, eating and drinking into holy communion, society into church, cross into brooch. In sum, see how the Lamb of Calvary is re-organizing human chaos, reversing human instincts, revolutionizing human tendencies, co-ordinating human faculties, transfiguring human sensibilities, marshaling human powers, disclosing human potentialities, celestializing human character, up-rearing the temple of the New Humanity. Jesus the Christ is the universal Seminary, at which mankind is evermore learning. He is the contemporary of all ages; the watershed of humanity, all yonder side of him flowing into oblivion, all this side of him flowing into immortality—Himself the

“Lever to uplift the earth,
And roll it in another course.”

And Jesus Christ was never so influential as he is this very hour. In vain have the kings of the earth set themselves

in array, and the rulers taken counsel together against Jehovah and against his Anointed, saying,

Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.

Time has proved that Julian the apostate was no match for Matthew the publican ; Hume the philosopher, no match for Mark the evangelist ; Gibbon the historian, no match for Luke the physician ; Voltaire the scoffer, no match for John the exile ; Strauss the professor, no match for Peter the fisherman ; Renan the scholar, no match for Paul the tentmaker ; Satan the destroyer, no match for Jesus the carpenter. Do you talk about a waning Christianity ? As well talk about a waning Deity !

Thus Jesus' personality, Jesus' religion, Jesus' influence, is time's overshadowing Phenomenon. And so emerges our philosophical problem.

HOW WILL YOU ACCOUNT FOR JESUS
OF NAZARETH ?

It is a fair question to ask. A Phenomenon so stupendous demands explanation. Among the axioms of reasoning are these: "From nothing, nothing comes ; Every effect must have a cause ; Every effect must have an adequate cause." Here is a colossal effect : What caused it ? It is, I repeat, a philosophical question.

How will you account for the Personality of Jesus ? Recall the age in which he lived—an age of Cæsarean imperialism, selfishness, debauchery, brutality, atheism ; an age of Jewish traditionalism, hollowness, conceit, bigotry, sanctimoniousness. Yet, despite all this, Jesus of Nazareth is time's solitary perfect character—history's transcendent miracle. Instead of Christ's character having been the product of his age, it was an absolute anachronism. Instead of Christ's character having been an evolution, it was a cataclysm of graciousness, as though himself were a parentless Melchizedek let down from above, without biographical father or mother, without historic begin-

ning of days or prophetic end of time. How then will you account for this unique break in the law of heredity, this tremendous exception to the law of environment? How happens it that Jerusalem with her Temple, Egypt with her Heliopolis, Athens with her Academy, Rome with her Forum, France with her Sorbonne, Germany with her Heidelberg, England with her Oxford, America with her Cambridge, how happens it that these, and all such as these, have not produced the peer—only dim hints—of the Nazarene? How then will you account for him? It is a fair question to ask: Whose Son is he?

Again, How will you account for the Religion of Jesus? Recall again his environment—his dwarfing surroundings of rabbinism, traditionalism, trivialities, cant, bigotry. Yet, despite that unfortunate heredity, that disastrous environment, this poor Galilean, this young, unlured, despised, crucified carpenter founded a religion so seminal and prophetic that even

now, after eighteen hundred years, there are many people who call it Utopian—a religion supremely fresh, pure, lofty, profound, catholic, controlling, immortal. How will you account for this most remarkable moral phenomenon—Christianity? Again I say it is a fair question to ask: Whose Son is the founder of Christianity?

Once more, How will you account for the Influence of Jesus? Ponder his boundless personal sway over men. Recall the tremendous hold he has had from the beginning, and never so tremendous as to-day, on mankind. Recall the sweeping victories of the early Church, in spite of imperial persecutions; the homage implied in the initials, B. C., and A. D.; the differences between Christendom and Pagandom; the wonderful transformations of personal character; the mysterious help that comes to his followers in time of trouble; the sense of communion that his people have with him; the readiness with which, were it needful, millions would die for him.

How then will you account for this influence of Jesus—an influence so personal, continuous, intense, all-dominating? Again I declare it is a fair question to ask: Whose Son is he?

Here then is our philosophical problem: How will you account for this unparalleled phenomenon—JESUS CHRIST? Once more I assert, it is a fair question to ask: Whose Son is this Jesus Christ? We all admit that he was David's Son. How is it that, as history proves, he is also David's Lord and Humanity's Lord?

So we pass from the philosophical problem to

The Practical Problem: What will you do with Jesus of Nazareth?

IT IS A MOMENTOUS QUESTION. Recall his stupendous claims. He declared that he was a teacher sent from God; he taught that he is the sole Deliverer of mankind; he claims to be still alive, and from his throne in the heavens demands

earth's allegiance and adoration ; he announces that he is to be the final Judge of mankind. These are tremendous claims. Hence the question, What will you do with him ? is a tremendous question. If he is to be believed, our treatment of him is decisive of our own destinies. What then will you do with Jesus Christ ?

Again, IT IS AN EXECUTIVE QUESTION. It is not a question of theory, but a question of practice ; not a question of creed, but a question of deed ; not a question of words, but a question of works ; not a question of church, but a question of life. What then will you do with Jesus of Nazareth ?

Again, IT IS A PERSONAL QUESTION. Practically speaking, you cannot separate Christianity from Christ. If there is any Christianity, it is because there is a Christ. And this Christ demands a personal coronation at your hands. Neutrality here is impossible. Neutrality ? It is hostility. What then will you do with Jesus of Nazareth ?

Once more, IT IS A PRESSING QUESTION. Recall Pilate's dilemma in his own Prætorium: "What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called the Christ?" But Pilate was not the only man who has been summoned to ask this tremendous question. There is a sense in which it is awfully true that Jesus of Nazareth is still on our hands, still awaiting our judgment concerning him. Pilate's question is an immortal question, which you and I, not less than Pilate himself, must answer. Scripture asks the question; so does history; so does literature; so does art; so does philosophy; so does science; so does civilization; so does conscience; so does providence; so do I. As in the days of his flesh, so now, he can in no wise be hid. It is a pressing question; a question which no thoughtful man can blink.

How long then, O friend, will you halt between two opinions in this stupendous matter? What will you do NOW with Jesus of Nazareth? Oh, do not answer as

Pontius Pilate answered ! Be true to your nobler instincts. With the Roman centurion, standing by the cross, exclaim :

“THIS IS THE SON OF GOD !”

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